

Polit. Pamph. vol 124. 17

A N

ESSAY

ON THE

T I M E S.

*Per me equidem, sint omnia protinus alba,
Nil moror. Euge ! omnes, omnes, bene miræ eritis res.
Hoc juvat.* —————

PERS.



L O N D O N :

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M DDC LVI.

[Price One Shilling.]

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A N
E S S A Y
O N T H E
T I M E S.



T is sufficiently known, that at that ever-memorable peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in which France had the modesty to demand, and Great Britain the meekness to yield hostages, the limits of our possessions in America, were referred to a future decision. Those limits too had been by the treaty of Utrecht left uncertain, and litigable at a time, when nothing could have hindered their being peremptorily settled, but the grossest, supinest negligence on our side, and that rage of patching up a peace in a hurry, which (circumstances considered) would have then been less wondered at in the French, than in the English,
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who thus made no better use of a victorious war, than to leave one of the most material points of possession unexplain'd, and open to the cavils of a nation, too alert to overslip the occasion of any, whenever they can start them to advantage.

After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the French were not contented with drilling on our commissaries with every art of elusive chicanery: they were not content with keeping us out, in the mean time, of those territories in North America, which are ours by undoubted right, and molesting us in those of which we stand actually possess, but they must add to these injuries, so gross and insulting a mockery, as even to deny the name by which the disputed country had been immemorially known, and under color of this ridiculous plea, to confine our right to a trifling, insignificant peninsula, so situated, as to be rather an incumbrance, than an availment, to the possessors, unless connected with the adjacent territories, which ever bore the same name, and were ever deemed inseparably connected with it, and from which they could not have the shadow of a title for supposing them separated, unless the inconvenience of their being conterminous to the river of St. Laurence, that inlet to Canada, and to their encroachments on the western inland part of our settlements in America, may be called a title. A title which would equally hold good for their demanding Dover from us. What hostilities they used, both directly

rectly and indirectly, by stirring up the natives to impede the spreading our settlement in Nova Scotia, to its just extent, are too notorious to need any farther insistence. But this was not all. The English colonists in America, after having much too long, and much too tamely, suffered the French to creep along the back part of their inland settlements, and under favour of those lakes (so admirably fitted for promoting an inland trade and navigation) to open a communication highly convenient to them no doubt (which was still all their title) even so far down as to the Mississippi; the English, I say, began to look with a justly jealous eye upon these encroachments, that tended not only to abridge them of their districts, which by the very tenor of their grants, and the nature of their situation, could know no limits to the West, but what is called the South Sea, but to render their properties in actual possession more precarious, and in course less valuable. Rouzed then at length by usurpations, of which they saw no end, and to prevent their being inched out of their lands by these intruders, they proceeded to vindicate their undoubted right to the extension of their frontier westward. Accordingly, a fort was built on the Ohio; upon notice of which the French, in full time of peace, arbitrarily, and without either previous declaration, or a proper representation to our Court, sent a party of men, and dislodged our people without further ceremony; and yet, after having thus

contumeliously treated our nation, have they the impudence to traduce the English in every Court in Europe, as the aggressors in the quarrel, or as if these had done any more than carrying on the war upon both elements, which they had begun upon one.

But of all the instances of French disingenuity, and of abusive groundless declamation, with which they have labored to inodiate this nation to all Europe, there is not perhaps a more flagrant, or a more easily refutable one, than the reproach they have not been ashamed to make us, of the instructions given to general Braddock, as if in the least inconsistent with a declaration of a posterior date, from the ministry to the French ambassador, denying that Braddock had orders to act hostilely, or invasively.

Recrimination is no defence : or surely were that reproach even well founded, it would come with the worst grace imaginable from the French, whose example we should have done no more (and God knows that would have been bad enough) than imitate, with this mitigation of having been provoked into it, by their shewing us the way, of disrespecting that publick faith, which ought to be sacred to all nations.

But the truth is, that the very shadow of any accusation of injurious or unfair procedure on our part, must vanish on the least reflection upon the nature, propriety, and intention of such instructions, admitting them to have been

as strongly couched as they pretend, and as for the honor of the government it is to be hoped they were.

The most inveterately prejudiced in favor of the French will hardly deny, that it was their prior hostility, their actual invasion, even to such a degree, as to demolish a fort, built by the English on specifically their own territories, which forced the English to send troops into those parts to defend their own, and to repel violence with violence. But should it be said, that this fort was not erected in a district incontestably our own, and that the question is therefore begged : let this objection for argument sake be granted, though against all color of truth or reality. Supposing then these territories to have been of no more to us than a dubious title : at least they will not deny that we had a right, after they had been notoriously long smuggling over their forces to Canada in small divisions, and at length openly in considerable bodies, to take some effectual measures to vindicate our title, call it a disputed one, to those lands which they were then manifestly usurping, as well as to prevent their dispossessing us of those, concerning which there was no dispute. Had we then any moral assurance that the flames of war, which themselves had kindled, might not spread further than those territories, to which tho' we had an equal right, that right had, on account of their inland situation, been left dormant and unexerted, impolitically if you please, but surely

ly not prescriptively in matter of claim against us? in the justest apprehension then, of a nation never known to set other limits to its own encroachments than its convenience, what ground of complaint, what violation of the public faith could there be, for Braddock to receive instructions how to pursue incidentally the advantages of war, or to conduct retaliatively an invasion, which there was more than a moral probability the French would draw upon themselves, and in truth had already done more than was necessary to provoke it, by giving a most unjustifiable extension to the country they call Canada, and that obviously for the same motive of self-interest, as they had contracted the district of Acadia. Such a declaration then made to the French ambassador here, that the destination of the forces sent to the succor of the oppressed, and threatened English colonies in America, was purely a pacific one, has nothing in it but what was literally and rigorously true, both in fact and inference: as nothing is more universally allowed, than that a preparation for defence, and offence, is of all expedients the surest towards preserving or restoring peace. That Braddock then should be eventually furnished both with defensive and offensive instructions, with plans of operations adapted to contingencies, was plainly matter in course of his mission, and of which the French could not have the least reason to complain, unless they would engross to themselves exclusively the right of invasion,

invasion, or suppose us meek, or passive enough not to return them the compliment of one, whenever they should invite it, as, in truth, they had already done. In this fair and obvious sense then, what contradiction, what prevarication, can be laid to the charge of the English Government, (whilst it openly sent that reinforcement to their colonies, which the procedure of the French themselves had made an indispensable measure,) for its vouchsafing an assurance and declaration of pacific intentions? was this, by any construction, other, or more than telling them, that nothing on their part was intended to break the general peace on the desistance of the French, from their provocations, and from giving us occasion for supporting our rights by arms, or of exacting satisfaction for ulterior injuries. That Braddock then was equipped with all the instructions necessary for the most determinate war, is not in the least repugnant to the most sincere professions of wishing and meaning nothing but peace; as a man who puts on a sword, may, for all that, desire nothing so much as not to be compelled to draw it, or to make use of his fencing-master's instructions.

So far have I summarily stated the case of the aggression, and shewn on which side it lies, with a candor I might safely defy even the abbot Deville to implead, if he had not in the Dutch Observator (universally attributed to him) shewn how little he respects that virtue, whilst he aims at smothering the truth
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under all the flowers of sophistry, and at stirring up the passions by declamatory rants, and groundless reflexions.

But whilst the French are thus palpably obnoxious to the charge of having been originally the incendiaries of the war, whilst the English have, on the other hand, the justest of causes to maintain against the open invasions of their rights and properties, it seems the fate of this nation never to *imitate* the French, but in those points which redound to the reproach of their taste, or of their honor.

The French, it is true, set us the example of committing hostilities, without a previous declaration of war. But was such an example to be followed? Or can it well be given as a reason and sanction for our procedure? If they violated the sacred law of nations, in their informal attack upon a fort, in an obscure, remote spot of America, the old fair English way, was to have instantly declared war, and have repelled their perfidy in a manner more suitable to the dignity of the nation.

It will be said, that the measures to be kept with Spain, whose junction with France was to be apprehended, upon the declaration coming first from England, were the reason of postponing so essential a point. But surely a weaker excuse could not be urged. The aggression is, without doubt, virtually and more strongly implied by acts of hostility, than by any verbal declaration of war. This advantage

tage then the French had manifestly given us. Nothing was more easy than to prove it : and if the Spanish court could have refused its assent to so self-evident a point ; if it can be thought, that an actual violation of that peace, for the preservation of which it is supposed so interested, would not have more weight with it, than the mere matter of form of a declaration, there could, in all reason, exist no further reliance on the amity of that nation ; and our not declaring of war, in respect to it, was implicitly subordinating and sacrificing the national independence to its caprice or injustice ; and it was even a jest to think other, than that such an abject submission to that same dear brother of Spain, must be ultimately a vain one.

The failure then of this essential form, which is only the less defensible for its being an imitation of the French, has furnished them with that handle for declaiming against us, of which they have taken such advantage.

The hostilities begun and committed by them in a nook of America, though to the full as real infractions of the peace, as any we have since retaliatively continued, were not however of so glaring and universally striking a nature, as the predatory war by us carried on upon the sea, which was spread with their merchantmen innocently navigating it, upon the faith of a peace, of which this rupture had as to them received no sanction of a declaration of war ; and surely such a measure

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could not, humanly speaking, fail of bringing one on; so that to treat them as only provisional captures, is as false with respect to politics, as it is with respect to the law of nations; and was it necessary to wait pronouncing it such, till the event should prove it so?

But to examine his point with a true spirit of candor, let the question be fairly stated, to even the greatest bigot to national prejudices, and see whether he could safely, and in conscience, deny the conclusions, to be drawn in disfavor of an undeclared war, in the manner it has been carried on, especially at sea.

We will then suppose, for argument sake, (what thank God is not the case) that the English were the aggressors, in circumstances exactly alike with those of the French towards us: had that nation then in such a situation, all of a sudden, without a previous declaration of rupture, out-hounded all its ships of war to the chase, and destruction of our trade and navigation; I leave to any candid judge to consider what name the English would have given to such a procedure: would not our legislative assemblies, our coffee-houses, our streets, have rung with the bitterest invectives, the keenest iambics against Gallic perfidy, and breach of public faith? or can it be thought, that every nation in Europe is not deeply concerned, in decrying so pernicious a precedent?

Upon this occasion too, who could help pitying the destination of our expensive armaments, sufficient (if so vulgar an expression may

may be forgiven) for blowing Europe out of the water, to so scurvy an employ; armaments too under the influence of so great a man, as is now seen so worthily at the head of our naval affairs, and whose taste of the sweets of the Acapulco-plunder, was at least countenanced by the received law of nations, and who could not therefore be supposed to suggest or favor so irregular, and so invidious a measure, than which too surely nothing could have been more effectually contrived, to give so good a cause as ours the air and face of a bad one. This was then playing the game the French wished directly into their hands. Hurt, as they were, by the transient damage we did to their mercantile interest, a point which, though especially of late highly considered by them, was never but subordinated to their general system, they bore it with even pleasure, hugging themselves in the irreparable damage, they justly knew we were doing ourselves in the opinion of the public, and in the fair handle they saw it would give them for repairing of Dunkirk, which had ever been their capital object, and the reproach for which from hence they treated as so premature, that the French king, in his manifest, made no scruple of giving the lie in the face of all Europe to the ministry here, without scarcely mincing the term: an usage, which, if undeserved, must in this nation create a resentment equal, if that were possible, to so enormous an outrage, unless it should be ut-

terly dead to that sensibility of honour, the loss of which is ever one of the surest and most deplorable symptoms of an approaching dissolution.

In the mean time, the French did not let slip a fair occasion of making a parade of their moderation in returning us the Blandford man of war, they took with governor Lyttelton on board, whom they also dismissed, as if to shame us out of a procedure so contrary to the laws of nations, and, in fact, to our own interest. Still, even then, we went on as if the way to repair an error, was to persevere in it. Yet however we might despise this step of restitution made by the French; however we might treat it as a captious piece of ostentation, or what would be sillier yet, as a fear of us, with so little reason as they have to be afraid of us, perhaps the wisdom would have been to have imitated them in this laudable example, as we had before done an unjustifiable one of theirs, at least, we should have deprived them, in some measure, of the advantage of going on painting our procedure in the most odious colors, and distortions, they could imagine, to caricature it, with more success too, than the foul bottom of their own cause deserved. But that foul bottom, they were by ourselves, having fillily troubled the clearest water, enabled to keep out of the sight of a public, which rarely taking the pains to dive beneath the appearances of things, is so often the bubble of surfaces, lumps its conclusions

conclusions accordingly; and what is worse yet, is scarce ever brought to revoke them by any subsequent force of reason, or demonstration.

Upon seeing then that we continued our strange cruising war, it was very natural for them to show some signs of resentment. The wonder would have been if they had not. Accordingly, they took a step, which could very little increase their expences (their manner of military government considered) of cantoning their troops along the coast opposite to ours, which, besides the many other collateral advantage of such a position, evidently carried with it, that of holding us in a constant alarm and apprehension of the threatened invasion, as well as of making us take some precautionary measures against it. And such, in truth they were, that the expence of them, great as it is, is incomparably the least hurtful part of them to us.

They had also, for full obvious purposes, given room to fear, that Britain would be attacked in yet a tenderer part, even in H—— itself. And as such indeed it was treated, in the early and accumulative provision made for its safety, with a high hand, as it were in a bravade of what might be thought of so striking a predilection.

Fifty five thousand Russians were engaged, whose destination must appear to those, who knew either the map of countries, or of politics, to be that of auxiliaries rather to H—— than Br——. But as if that was not enough, in
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all the heat of over-diligence, before the ink of the signature of that treaty was scarce dry, there was another struck up with Pr—, by way of providing a cloak for that El—, on the other shoulder. Pr—— then condescended, for a valuable consideration, part of which was the admission of a claim, demonstrated shamefully unjust, to engage virtually to hinder the French from penetrating the El——, though this latter treaty was in plain terms contradictory to, and tending to blank that with Russia, by rendering the stipulated march of its troops unnecessary, which was a kind of baulk, or frustration, that could not be greatly making our court to that nation; insomuch, that it would be scarce to be wondered at, if their disgust was to throw it into the arms of France, or at least considerably cool its amity towards us.

The Russian treaty then, alien as it was at first to any very valuable purposes, at least as to B——, was thus rendered yet worse by this strange annulment of it, to say nothing of the offence that treaty must have given to those German princelings, whose clearest revenue arising from their traffic in the blood of their wretched subjects. This must be a circumstance alone sufficient to disaffect them to H— as they could not be extremely pleased to see it carry our custom to another shop. No measure too could be more unnational to Germany, than thus threatening it with the irruption of so formidable, and till lately considered as a barbarous

a barbarous nation, under the color of an auxiliary to a particular province of it, against the invasion of another equally to be dreaded, though it seems not so obnoxious a power : two points that furnished the K— of Pr— with an occasion of assuming the character of guardian to the empire, in that counter-treaty, so glorious and so advantageous to him, but so uncomprehensible as to Britain, which must only be the weaker for such an accession, thus purchased at a dishonorable expence, and with the loss of allies, besides the discredit for levity, or impolicy.

And here may be fairly asked the question, whether, on debating the act of settlement, such a supposition had been started, as that such an event might possibly come into existence, as the hiring fifty five thousand Russians for the defence either of H— or Br— through its connexions with H—? whether, I say, the broacher of such a supposition would not, of the two, have been thought a properer object to be sent to Bedlam for being crazy, than to the Tower for a disloyalist ; and yet,

——*Volvenda dies en attulit ultro.*

This provision having been so early, and so courtierly made, what shall be said of the further measures taken for the protection of Great Britain, against the invasion impending from the troops cantoned along the French coast? and here, it may not be improper to sketch
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a short retrospect of England's once happy and honorable situation, in comparison of its present one.

Not to go so high as the time of Edward III. let us consider it under Henry V. Under then the disadvantages of a fierce martial gaunt neighbor, ever ready and ever willing, upon the first occasion, to carry fire and sword into the heart of its dominion, Ireland then not thoroughly conquered, and rather a drain of men and treasure, than of the least assistance to us ; yet this nation, born up by the native courage, and the not yet exploded patriotism of its inhabitants, could pour numerous troops into France, and crown its king in the capital of it, at a time too, when the strength of France was not inferior to what it is now, in any proportion to the seeming encrease of ours to what it was then ; and see to what we are reduced ! England, with all its accessions of territory, and real or nominal wealth, is confessedly unable to defend itself, and forced to sue for assistance to Hessians and Hanoverians, to fight for our Religion, Laws, Life, Liberty, Property, and every thing that is dear to us. These precious tutelar forces then are landed, and have graciously brought to Britain that safety, which it would once have blushed to have owed to any power but its own.

In the mean time the Dutch, who owe their very being as a state, and their name amongst nations, to the generosity of our ancestors, extended to them at a time, when barely a non-concurrence

concurrence to their assistance, would have been as certain death to them in their instant struggles, as the most actual hostility; to say nothing of later obligations, even then the Dutch, whether from still not stomaching a stadtholder being crammed down the throats of their burgomasters, a sort of gentry, who naturally care as little for parting with any share of their power, as some amongst their neighbors here, or from their phlegmatic unapprehensiveness of the prodigious wisdom of our councils, have not only declined affording us that aid, it was doing them but too much honor to ask of them, though in consequences of treaties, but have behaved in so shy and gloomy a style, as gives but little marks of a friendly, or even scarcely not of an unhostile disposition towards us.

And now, after so many instances of Britain's perhaps too officiously interfering on the continent, at the expence of its blood and treasure, for the preservation of the common liberty of Europe, there is scarce a state in it that will vouchsafe us its alliance, even upon the Swiss footing of paying for it; and what a solid dependence can be had upon mere mercenaries, may be sufficiently seen in all antient, and modern history. There is indeed, as before observed, the appearance on the side of H— of one ally newly made out of an old enemy, or at best a suspicious friend, from whose disposition Britain had once very little to fear or hope: and yet that alliance, though ultroneously

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(as it is given out, and for the prededuced reasons so it might well be) proffered by him, does not, for all that, come but loaded with a preliminary concession of British money, not only highly unreasonable, but in the pretext for it, big with a precedent of a most pernicious tendency, besides the certainty of that treaty's disgusting one old ally, and the danger of its alienating another, and both very powerful. May it not too come out after all, that he has entered into this treaty purely to take our money, and laugh at us, either in playing a concerted collusive game with France, or in adhering to a cold system of observation, the object of which will be less to hinder mischief, than to promote it, if but to have the better chance of raising his market! may he not in short prove more dangerous as a subtilizing insidious pretended friend, than he could possibly have been as an open enemy!

Thus then deserted at its greatest need, the nation sees itself precisely in the condition of a silly prodigal, who having mortgaged, and destroyed his estate, in undistinguishing liberalities and senseless profusions, finds no friend left him in his distress, and wonders as much at it, as if his conduct had been of a nature to deserve any.

It is true, however, we have still our land and naval forces left, sufficient, under the direction of a national, steady, well concerted system, to extricate us out of our present plunge, and replace the state once more on a respectable

respectable footing. Nor can there be a doubt of such a system being set on foot, from the urgency of those conjunctures, which have been palpably brought on by the impolicy of having so long drawled on without one; and of improvidently trusting from day to day to the chapter of chances.

As to the army, they must delight in despair, who do not hope every thing from one so well constituted as ours, which must be the most sensible to those who know it most, especially on making their own candid resolution to themselves of the few following queries, the measure of their opinion.

1st. What qualifications of the head and heart are necessary in generals, to beget effectively the soldiers love and confidence in them?

2dly. How far the officers have been taught to consider their military duty as a science, and, in truth, a profound one, and what care has been taken to inure them to fatigues, and warlike exploits?

3dly, Engineer-ship having become the most capital branch in the modern practice of war, since the artillery has taken so much the place of hand-arms even in the field; whether the indispensable study of that, and of military architecture, have been duly, generally and early enough, to be at this time a match for the French in them, recommended and cultivated?

As for what concerns the common or private men; it is notorious that nothing has been

omitted towards the dressing them out for a review, nor in truth towards any externals of discipline, properly enough called the fopperies of war; but as to that spirit, that notion of honor, that sacred principle of fighting for one's country, which has such virtue in the hour of battle, it has doubtless been supposed so innate in them, that it has been left purely to their own cultivation, and to their observance of its energy in the generality of their superiors.

From the navy too, surely there was not less to be hoped, encouraged and flushed as it was with its triumphs over unarmed merchantmen, and gorg'd with the bait of prize-money. One might have hoped that honor, or if but gratitude for so safe a gain, would have engaged the gallant commanders of it to do their country justice in its trust of them, and that we should have had, at least, no example of any of them, calling, or concurring to councils of peace, scarce out of sight of an inferior enemy, in proof that they had far a greater taste for the sweets of Martinico-men, than for sheer fighting.

It were to be wished, however, for many solid reasons, that some method had been, in time, found out to procure for the navy its complement of men, in lieu of that wretched expedient of pressing, which may slave a fleet, but never man it: and every such fleet must, proportionably to the number of its forced hands, carry within itself a principle of defeat.

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If this abuse has been of antient standing, and hitherto produced no fatal effects, from the innate courage of our English sailors, surmounting every consideration, in the instant of action, so much the more must so valuable a class of subjects deserve the redress of a grievance, which is not of a nature for any prescription of time, to reconcile to it the objects of its arbitrary oppression. What good-will to the service of their country can be expected from the captives of their own country-men? or into what enemies hands could they fall, that would give them worse than such usage, and, who would at least have the law of nations on their side, whilst those country-men of theirs have that of their own nation directly against this practice, which yet it seems to tolerate, or connive at.

It is said too, and to be hoped groundlessly said, that the unwillingness of the common seamen to enter on board men of war, does not entirely proceed from the wages being less than what are given in merchantmen, nor from their considering them as floating jails, but from the intolerable domineering and insolence, generally speaking, exercised upon them, under the notion, that it is absolutely necessary to what they call carrying a command, a term of which the mis-construction has probably done more mischief to the naval service, than all the points of abuse besides; as surely it can never be the way to raise the
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courage of the men by crushing of their spirit. Those poor heads, whom a little power is enough to intoxicate, will have no conception of this. But how much more nobly and wisely did that great admiral Blake think, and address himself to his ship's company, when he told them, *That the meanest of them were free-born Englishmen as well as himself, and that officers and fore-mast-men were all fellow-servants to the Government of their country.* Words of this import must sound rather more animating to a British ear, than those with which the publick papers (falsely no doubt) make an admiral lately conclude his harangue—"there are only two choices, fight or — be hanged!" an alternative surely to be addressed with more propriety to a pirate-crew, on a man of war's coming up with them, than to English sailors going against the enemies of their country.

Such then as think, or talk of even our common run of seamen, as mere brutes, and who are to be treated as such, are most egregiously mistaken, to say no worse. If they want the smoothing of education, they have at least, in common with other men, a feeling of injuries and oppressions, and so exquisite an one of Gratitude, that they would fight, as if all heart for a commander, who should use them with due tenderness and humanity, whilst they have so right a plain natural sense, that they would despise their officers for any familiarity, that would misbecome their station,

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or tend to derogate from their authority ; they instinctively, it may be said, distinguish between the expedience of discipline, and the wantonness of tyranny, more damping than even the example of cowardice itself, which by the bye it scarce ever but implies. It may also be worth consideration, how tender, how nice a point our superiority at sea is : how liable to be lost even in one season, after having preserved it for ages. The French, sensible at length of the infinite importance of a power on that element, have for some years past, strenuously applied to the improvement of their marine ; they have succeeded accordingly. Their naval architecture is not a whit inferior to ours : they begin to work their ships as well ; and have made valuable alterations in their sea-artillery, by encreasing their weight of metal, and lessening the number of their guns : in short, they have taken such effectual pains, as might convince us they are in earnest to contend with us for that dominion of the Main, of which we have been so long in possession. Even the Spaniards, even the Neapolitans, even the Genoese, begin to be touched with the same emulation. Can it then be too strongly the care of the English to keep up their greatest distinction ? could any thing befall them worse, than for them to lose that ascendant they have hitherto had over all other nations, in that point so important to their honor, and even to their self-preservation, an ascendant, which unaccountably procures to those

those who are possess of it, the victory by dint of presuming it, as much, perhaps, as by any thing else ; an ascendant, in short, which, tho' soon lost, is rarely if ever recover'd.

There was a time when the French, Spaniards, and indeed Europe in general affected to distinguish the English and Dutch by the term of maritime powers. What is become of the pretensions of the Dutch to that title, every one sees, and themselves will probably feel when it is too late : and surely it would make the heart of an Englishman bleed to think, tho' barely but as of a contingency, what a wretched, precarious, dishonorable figure, this once great, noble, and respected nation would be reduced to, when it should have lost its power by sea especially. Neither is it but within the memory of man, that we should have heard of the junction of the French and Spanish navies, with the utmost unconcern, safe in the superiority of singly our own, and well grounded to look on their ships, spreading the ocean, rather as pledges to us of their good behaviour, than with an eye of fear or jealousy ; alas ! is it so now ?

As to the public funds, it is devoutly to be wished, that those double-refined politicians, who have been advocates for over-building, and raising the national debt to that enormous and tottersome height, at which it is now seen, and perhaps felt, upon the hypothesis of the constitution being the stronger for it, from its engaging the greater interest for the support of
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that government under which it was contracted, may find their system verified in the course of this war, and consequently give the lie to those superficial pretenders to a knowledge of the human heart, who imagine that even the greatest fears for one's property, are by no means of a nature to inspire in any proportion the courage to defend it, or, what is stranger yet, the spirit to contribute a competent part of it, though towards saving the whole, the burden of which is ever, as far as possible, even in times of the greatest exigency, shifted off to the commonalty, which is the least able to bear it, whose interests are ever the least regarded, and which has the least to lose by sinister events. What sort of defence then may be hoped from the slaves of interest, will easily occur, on figuring to one self an army composed of Stock-jobbers, jews, pedlars, brokers, usurers, and the like; from whose non-fighting turn, which is the very nature of their breeding, and profession, if no great matter of military prowess is ever expected, infinitely less yet must be the dependence, either in camp or cabinet, for personal, or political courage, on those wretches, who, without the excuse of such callings, have adopted their spirit, or to speak more properly their no-spirit, and have opened shop, in the highest places, resolving every thing into a sordid traffic, and simplifying every thing into money; which they as stupidly as falsely, to the destruction of public welfare, as well as of all social happiness, make the common

measure of even things that are forever by their nature beyond the reach of pecuniary influence, such as patriotism, honor, esteem, friendship, love, natural affection, all the invaluable points, in short, which not only rank amongst the first duties in life, but to a true taste constitute its most exalted pleasures. In the exploding, however, of which, and substituting this single dirty Passion of interest, and that too not understood, its miserable missionaries hug themselves, as if this was a wonderful refinement of the times. Yet when this infamous principle shall have pervaded the whole mass of the nation, (and how far is it from it?) what vigor, or functions of life can be expected from such a nation, any more than from an human body, eat up with the scurvy, or putrifying alive? considering then the dastardliness and poverty of spirit, constitutional to the money-mad, and the not impossible dissection of the paper-fabric of the funds, by the shock of a state-quake, it is surely paying a government no very great compliment, to place amongst its props, so wretched and so crazy a one. In the mean time, a true history of the first rise, and unmeasurable growth of the public debt, would doubtless exhibit a curious and instructive view of jobs, temporary expedients, and finesses, not forgetting that pleasant method of discouraging, that almost universal passion of gaming, by working with it, and clawing its itch, so as to make it tax itself, in the lotteries that are opened for its contributions, and which,

which, besides the notable influence they have on trade, and industry, are fine money-traps for the lower sort of people in general, who greedily snap at the bait of the prizes, and part with the bone in their mouths, the acquisition, perhaps, of long and hard labor, for an overgrown imaginary shadow.

From the funds then, to the American colonies, is no very forced transition, as the public is so deeply concerned in them. With respect to these, it may justly be thought, that if the measures taken for their succor, are tardy, or in the least short of the exigence, it would have been full as well, or better by all the expence, that would then have been saved, to have taken none at all, and have left things there to their course: as there is not perhaps a more ruinous, or a more ill-judged parcimony, than not furnishing full supplies, or than dribbling them, at times, unserviceably, though perhaps, in the end to as great an amount, as would be effectual if contributed at one heat. Such a practice is like the folly of the physician, administering a medicine in drops, where the intention of cure requires a whole draught. One would think too, that in this occasion especially, those colonies, separate as they now are in distinct provinces, might, without the least infringement of their respective privileges, have been timeously united, and compacted, under one common supream governor sent from hence, so as to have brought them beneficially into an unity

of concert and action against the common enemy. What has been given for a reason, why this has not been done before, is so ridiculous, so false an one, that there is no believing it was ever seriously advanced; and that is, a jealousy of this their mother-country, of such a measure being possible to be abused, into their shaking off their dependence upon it. Whoever knows any thing of those colonies, of the genius, spirit, and interest of them, aggregately or severally considered, must easily know, that nothing could equal the injustice of such a suggestion, except indeed the stupidity of it.

But the truth is, that unhappily there was too long wanting, either an inclination or a capacity amongst the men of power, to bring the whole body of the British dominions, (including especially Ireland by name, for its just pre-eminence,) into one great collective point of view, so as to make all parts of them, without preferential favour or affection, co-operative, and inservient to each other's welfare and prosperity, instead of considering, and treating them separately, and consequently to the weakening of the whole, in petty provincial lights, even down so low, as to the making borough-interests distinct objects.

In the mean time, under all the discomfort of a situation not so pregnant as might be wished, with the promise of a successful war, at least, if the inauspicious outset of it may be allowed any influence in the prognostic, and
affording

affording no prospect of its terminating soon, unless in what would be yet infinitely worse, an ignominious insecure peace, that to the cruel circumstance of receiving law from an insolent enemy, would add the infamy of deserving such a fate ; still under all these gloomy (and may they prove vain !) apprehensions, it must be a great satisfaction to think, that the disastrous pass to which affairs are brought, was an unavoidable fatality, or their course must have been diverted by the vigilance, and abilities of those men of power, under whose gracious protection affairs at present are ; no human means having been omitted, that sound policy, joined to the most fervent patriotism, could suggest, as may appear upon a candid review of the times and circumstances, which have immediately led to the present state of things.

From the obvious ponderation, that nothing can more effectually contribute to the confirming of old alliances, or to the forming and cementing of new ones, than the stationing able ministers in the foreign courts, where insignificant ones must be fitter to expose a nation, than to represent it, and to hurt than to advance its interests, such a choice was accordingly made, as might amaze the world at their indifferent success, considering their known capacity and penetration, their consummate knowledge of affairs, and of mankind, their polite address, their dignity, the command of the earliest intelligence, and all
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the talents in short requisite for negotiation. To select instances might be invidious, but those who know them best, must be most surprized at their succeeding no better, in attaching the respective Courts, in which they shined away, to that nation, of which they were however less the representatives than of the ministry which made choice of them, and of which they were doubtless intended as the living transcripts, and consequently must diffuse abroad the highest idea of it.

Thus such notable care having been taken of the conduct of affairs abroad, those at home were carried on with equal spirit, tho' unhappily with equal success. And yet, if the greatness and happiness of a people, according to an universally received axiom in politics, depend on the great posts of power and influence, being officiated by men of a capacity to fill them, what nation has such a set of picked ones to boast of as ours? the wonder is where, and from what quarters could be assembled such an assortment of living rarities, especially considering what delicacy, what acuteness of discernment prevail at present, in the choice of subjects, whose exalted talents are seen at once, equally to support, and to adorn the state.

For it is not now, as in former times, when no claim to the greatest employ was so sure to succeed, as precisely that of not being qualified for the least. When ministers were jealous of all men of merit, as their competitors
for

for power, with a juster title than theirs, dreaded them as their judges, or hated them as being implicitly a reproach to them. They cherished, they loved, they promoted no creatures but their compeers in imbecility, or whose taste, congenial to their own, could sacrifice that true sublime of life, that exquisite sensation of pleasure, the consciousness of deserving well of ones country, to such silly, sordid trash-considerations, as would rather turn the stomach, than corrupt the heart of any man, who had so much as the least pretension to truth, and dignity of taste: whilst too they had the impudence to treat, as bubbles to antiquated and exploded principles, such as did not appear to make their only idol of self-interest, themselves all the while most lamentably ignorant of the capital points, in which true self-interest must for ever essentially consist. In the whole circle of employs then, in that inglorious period, there was not perhaps a single instance to be produced of merely merit being consulted in their disposal. No! they dreaded even the shadow of it, and the very reverse of that spirit which dictated Alexander's bequeathment of his crown, constantly took place, and the *deitur indigniori* was literally and religiously adhered to in practice, as an indispensable state maxim; not however, without a great and due collateral regard to cousin-hood, to borough-interest, or to recommendations from men of power, of creatures, if possible, as worthless as themselves.

It

It must not have been, in those times, an undiverting scene, though rather of the lowest droll kind, to have attended one of your little men of power's levy, to have noted the figure and air of those animalcules who were plyers at it: to have seen wretches of birth, and fortune, without the plea of want, and valuing themselves only according to the price they proposed fetching at that infamous market, paying their court to one perhaps their inferior in every point, except that of power, which too was a scandal to themselves, as he might never have got into it, but for their abjection and supine remissness in leaving that field open to him, of which they were afterwards mean enough to cringe to him for any little share of the harvest, he would please to allot them, on their selling themselves and country to obtain it. One sees, methinks! one of those illustrious idlers, daubed over with embroidery, and perhaps betaudered with a ribbon, emphatically expressing, by his address, his hunger for a place or pension, somewhat in the manner of Plautus his sycophant.

*Nunc si ridiculum hominem quærit quispiam,
Venalis ego sum cum ornamentis omnibus,
Inanimentis explementum quærito.*

Yet out of the spiritless beggars of this stamp, vacancies of employs were often, if they could not, properly speaking, be called filled, at least so abusively bestowed, as to exclude those much worthier subjects who dis-
dained

dained to solicit for what, in all good policy, they ought to have been sought for, and courted to accept. Whilst the groveling mob of dependents, and subalterns, could naturally be no more displeased at seeing power and profit run in those muddy channels, than a shoe-boy at not seeing the streets clean, who is to get his livelihood by the dirt of them. The comparison may be low; but can it be lower than the object of its application? for what could be more favorable to such as they, than to see places of the most national importance within the reach of every thing but merit, that greatest requisite, and therefore the surest of exclusion, and now become even the sport, as it were, of chance or caprice, dealing them out at random, to some, for having perfunctorily discharged a provincial office without any affinity to public affairs, or any conversancy of theirs in them; to others for the empty sound-sake of some name, once of account, but which nature never meant them to fill, or for some trivial insignificant circumstance, of no more relation, or proportion to the general system of things, than the shooting of London-bridge, or taking a west-country barge with a man of war's boat's-crew, would be to the direction in chief of the Navy.

Thus a mean, frivolous, and false taste universally prevailing, the times themselves being no longer favorable to the forming of great men for the service of their country, one might, amongst the eminent post-lollers of

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those

those times, have pointed out, more than one secretary of state that could not write, and embassadors that could not speak.

The empty forms of business then composed the whole substance of it, though to no more effect, than artificial eyes, stuck in the orbits of real ones, which may indeed represent the natural organs of vision, but can never supply their function. Servilely then plodding on in an old rote, for want of courage to venture into new tracks, however strongly conjunctures might require it, and so incapable of benefiting even by their own experience, that no number of years could turn them out less novices than when they began; these men who affected to controul the state, were themselves no better than the slaves, or victims of events, from their inability to form systems that should have commanded them. Instead of which they kept on in a self-contented insufficiency, hugely pleased, and holding themselves abundantly acquitted by their common-place measures, like the school-boys of the lower classes, with their nonsense verses, in which, so they keep but quantity and measure, they are excused any meaning.

If it sometimes happened that men of superior abilities, either seduced through human infirmity, or in the hopes at least of hindering harm, deigned to mingle with their mass, into which however they were never but reluctantly, and through the force of conjunctures admitted; they soon grew sick of their places; they soon saw that they must either go all
undue

undue lengths with them, or quit, which some were heartily glad to do, if but to regain the pleasure of breathing fresh air, out of the pestilential precincts of folly and dulness.

But whilst the ruling band proceeded very solemnly, making capital points of trifles, and trifles of capital points; tho' one would have hardly thought them very tempting models of imitation, the times themselves look too strong a tincture of their worthlessness. All the liberal arts and sciences, whether of peace, or war, with their essential train of dependences, fell into neglect, and disregard, whilst they were so industriously cultivated in a neighboring nation (whose follies alone were thought worthy of imitation, and that a most awkward one indeed!) and whose vices, though to the full as great, and as rife as any where else, are however dignified, if that were possible, by some taste, and compensated by some virtues.

Even the old manly British eloquence, was not proof against the epidemical enervity, and degenerated into fustian rants, puerile conceits, and those witticisms, which may more properly be esteemed flourishing the point than pushing it. The most celebrated harangues, presented an image of squibs, crackers and artificial fireworks, bouncing and bursting into a thousand little sparks, the false glare of which rather created a momentary dazzle, than threw a steady light upon the point in debate. The petulance of groundless presump-

tion, an intemperance of acrimony, and above all, a party-spirited opiniatrety, disgraced, and vulgariz'd the oratory of the contending parties, who, like mere attornies, maintained their cue of talking eternally on one side of the question, without knowing the value of making those fair concessions, those occasional acknowledgments of right, even in their opponents, which are so great a grace, and form such favorable prepossessions of the candor and wisdom of the party who makes them. The prevalence of the chiefs of the parties, more than any concern for the public, engrossed the attention, and zeal of the humble herds of their respective followers, whilst some lay perdue, in readiness to side with the conqueror, as soon as it should be decided.

Quis nemori imperitet, quem tota armenta sequantur

Yet, even in that wretched period, it is but fair to remark, that it was too often the cruel and unjust practice to accuse men in great employs, of dishonesty and corruption, whereas they were in truth, rather objects of the greatest pity. Mere want of parts, or intellectual disability, after all, are misfortunes, and never crimes. Even that blindness of the most worthless to their own insufficiency, that blindness, which seems the tender reparation of nature for her unkind treatment of them, in the distribution of her choicest gifts, acquits them in all equity of any intentional guilt in that rage of theirs, of grasping so tenaciously

naciously those posts, of their being so deplorably disqualified for which, they were thus invincibly ignorant. It must not then have been very surprizing, to see them full of their false importance, form'd into a kind of confederacy for their mutual support against their common enemies, those of a superior merit, of which by a kind of paradox of self-love, they had a sort of instinctive unaccountable apprehension, without any light from their understanding; for to see the great man in another, one must have something of it in one self. Such a confederacy then, founded upon their common fears, and but the stronger for the hearty contempt of all the members of it for one another, having just sense enough to discern one another's weakness, which each individual looked upon as his own security from rivalry, or favorable to his schemes of supplantment, might, *bona fide*, imagine that the Palladium of Britain specifically consisted in the nation's being under the protection of their *wisdom*! Consequently they viewing themselves in this precious light, might very consistently, with the loyalest intentions, use all means to keep their hold of power, either on terms of composition, often grievously disapproved of by themselves, or by lessening their master, in prescribing to him their continuance in his service, as if the circumstance alone of their continuing in his service, did not in all conscience tend to make him little enough: whether one considers the ill done to affairs
from

from the faint, enervate execution of these state-eunuchs, or the good their jealousy hindered, by keeping more capable subjects out of office. Yet as these poor men probably did the best they could; (and what more, in any sense, could be expected from them?) and were only instinctively fond of power, as children are of play-things, tho' they break and spoil them, nothing could more deserve compassion than they did, unless perhaps that disgracefully ruined nation, which should have been passive enough to be thus fribble-ridden by them. But the worst of the jest, and the most serious of its consequences would be, that such personages, actuated by that little low cunning, which makes them pursue their petty interests, in prejudice to those much greater ones, which the stake they have in their country must inseparably connect with its welfare, they would take all the measures possible to beg, and engross their future patron, to beleaguer him with their creatures, who should hebetate or inspire him with all their own littleness of character, contractedness of notions, and tastelessness for all that is great, noble, and elevated, so as to form a hopeful little master after their own heads, and hearts, whilst to countenance their procedure, to quiet their possession, and to drown the murmurs of those who would wish him better, they would think their mock-loyalty abundantly salved, by crying out in chorus, with great solemnity of face, God save king Log! their whole

whole little drift would then be to establish what Sir Philip Sidney, so properly calls, "*the worst kind of OLIGARCHY, that is, when*" "*men indeed are governed by a few, and yet*" "*are not taught to know what those few be,*" "*whom they should obey. For they having the*" "*power of kings, but not the nature of kings,*" "*use the authority, as men do their farms, of*" "*which they see within a year they shall go out :*" "*making the king's sword strike whom they*" "*bated, the king's purse reward whom they*" "*loved, and (which is worst of all) making the*" "*royal countenance serve to undermine the royal*" "*authority.*"

Such a conduct then might consistently enough be presumed of understandings narrow enough, to imagine, through an inverted policy, that they could not found their own greatness, better than on their master's littleness, apes of a Richelieu's ambition, without a grain of his genius.

But those days are palpably over, and it is now full sufficiently seen, that the present state-managers, even for the sake of their own interest, to say nothing of that of their country, in which their fortune and situation give them a part too considerable not to be supposed to have some little regard for it, seek out for men of talents, and abilities to assist them in their several departments, and to co-operate with them for the more effectual service of the public. So far are they then from being fillily jealous of such subjects, that they are
sensible

sensible both from history, and even the knowledge of their own times, that amongst the many miserable mistakes that fools in power commit, one of the very grossest, is that of choosing fools for their instruments or supporters: such a choice too being far from carrying with it all that safety from rivalry they vulgarly imagine. For, besides their making the worst leaning-stocks in the world, sure as they are to sink under the least weight, or stress laid upon them, and apt to hurt even where they mean to serve; besides, their dishonoring the judgment of those who employ them, as nothing can be a surer mark of littleness than, in that point, the making a little choice, they almost ever repay it with ingratitude: nothing in nature being so selfish, so unsatiable, or so ungovernable, as especially that sort of them the half-witted, whose ingredient of fool in their character, is never in so small a quantity, as to hinder them from over-rating their own importance, from thinking they are not a whit less deserving than their employers, and from consequently using all their little art to supplant them, as occasion offers, that thus kicking off their trammels of subordination, they may set up for themselves. These subalterns too are ever the foremost, upon any of those ill consequences, which naturally follow weak measures, to throw the blame upon their patrons, and to join the cry against them.

Yet

Yet the melioration of management did not advance to the point in which we see it at present, but by degrees. It may be observed, that in a late conflict of embattled parties, those unmeaning cant-words, his *majesty's service*, and the *good of the country*, which used to be so falsely and undecently treated as distinct points, and so emphatically resounded on each side, worn out as they were to windowed raggedness, were at last honestly dropped. A new æra now opened: a more fair, if not a more modest system, took place of those stale, and transparent impositions, by which the public had been so long amused, and late, but at length, ceased to be blinded. It was now then to be braved, and the leaders of the conflicting parties put their dissensions openly and avowedly on the foot of personal pretension to power. Court and Country were equally out of the question: nor was there any other matter for wrangling, so much as pretended, than whether John-a-Nokes or Tom-a-Styles should be the pay-master, and of course, implicitly the general of the mercenaries; which, by the by, was a matter at bottom of about as much importance to the public, as which idiot of a horse-fancier should have won the last race at Newmarket; to that public I say, whom a lovely experience had long satisfied, that power might change hands, without changing maxims or measures; and that it was still the same dull state-farce, with perhaps some little alteration in the cast of parts.

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But

But though the interest of the nation was now no longer used, no, not so much as for a pretence, that did not however save it from still being a sacrifice, according to antient custom. It was still to the best bidder, at the expence of it, that power was often put up at auction, and often seen, like the Deyship of Algiers, the prize of the most noisy or turbulent mutineer. For whenever sufficiently galled, and harassed out by the worrying of such as took the stale, but commonly successful method of ranting, and bullying themselves up to a proper pitch for being taken off, the head-manager was brought to purchase his peace, by coming to a composition with them, it was ever, and that cavalierly enough, at the cost of the public welfare: the basis of their treaty being their giving up some justly popular point, or their acquiescence in some unbritish measure; and even that measure perhaps so lamentably unjudicious, and unconsquential, as to be less adapted to promote, than to defeat every end proposed by it.

To evince then the possibility of this last being the case, it may be sufficient to state one supposition, of what, it is to be hoped, never has been, nor ever will be, in existence. If then ministers, as insensible of their incapacity for power, as they are tenacious of it, should, consistently enough with such a character, be content to hold it of a good, and gracious master, who, on being gratified in his two favorite points, of money, and H——, should
indifferently

indifferently enough abandon all the rest to them, would it not be in its consequences the most perfidious ingratitude, the falsest service, the most ruinous procedure to their country, and themselves, not to represent effectually the obvious impolicy of sacrificing the sum of things to so partial a disposition? draining a country, and plunging it into inextricable debt, may be the means of momentary gain to particular persons; but must inevitably, a little sooner or later, strain even to breaking, all the strings of credit. But certainly not the most inveterate enemies, or maligners of H——, could suggest a surer expedient for endangering its security and welfare, than the too visible a preference of it to a nation, to which the treating it as a principal, not as an accessory, is not a less monstrous disproportion in weight than in measure. The centering then to that spot the whole attention of the state, and the whole open drift, or shallow subtendency of its operations and alliances, would only serve to place that doating-piece of dominion in an invidious point of light to the nation which should think itself slighted for it, or its interests at best but secondarily or subordinately thereto, considered and managed as it were by a father-in-law; such a jealousy, even if unjust, and no more than warranted by appearances, would be natural: but if well-grounded, the consequences of it would be infinitely worse, than even that jealousy. Measures so impolitic, and so disproportion-

ably partial, could not fail of detrimentally affecting the great and capital interests of the superior nation, of wounding its dignity, and and in short of lessening its power, even if it did not its inclination, to protect such a foreign province; nor could such a situation but ultimately kindle the national resentment against those weak enough not to have foreseen, or having foreseen, not to have done their duty in preventing it, or at least, in not lending their ministry towards it.

Nay! even H— itself would have no great reason to be obliged to such a predilection, which could but serve to mark it out to the enemies of Br—, for being like Achilles his heel, the only part in which it was vulnerable, at least whilst it held the dominion of the sea; of the great and natural barrier of which, if its connexion with H—— seems to deprive it, and bid it be no longer an island, that disadvantage is, however, in some measure compensated by the protection Br— now receives from it. The notion then, of the interest of H—— being the ruling passion here, and the vulgar report diffused of a hoard there of real (not paper) specie, pointing it out as the eligible object of attack, or menace; no wonder all those powers, of which it is not, absolutely out of reach, should on any quarrel with Br——, single that out as their fairest game, if but to put the nation into the grievous dilemma, either of the shame of deserting it, when obviously in danger upon their account,
or

or of great inconveniencies in taking its defence upon them, to which last nothing could so much disaffect the people, as the imagination of that incumbrance having been incurred unnecessarily, and injuriously to themselves. For otherwise, should a more enlarged, and true system of policy have prevailed, should this nation, by a due and wise preference of it, have been kept up to its pristine genuine pitch of greatness and power, is there a doubt to be made, but that in point of honor and gratitude, it would have looked on the protection of a country, dear to the author of such blessings, as even an indispensable duty? would there have been so much as a murmur at any measures to have been taken for its defence? they know very little the generosity of the nation, or do great injustice to it, who can think it might not have been very safely trusted, in that point: a nation which has been very often seen, even obtrusively to lavish its blood and treasures in quarrels of less concern to it. Besides that its strength would have implicitly been the bulwark of a country connected to it, and few would have been the foreign powers, that would not have thought twice before they had ventured to attack it, whilst so respectably allied. So that giving it the first place, must have been a preposterous policy, more adapted to do irreparable damage to the whole, than to save a part, or rather particle of it. It would be like selling the health of the whole
body

body for the sake of a little finger, which too could not, in the end, escape sharing its fate. Nothing can then be plainer, without the least paradox or forced inference, than that preferring the interest of H—— to that of this nation, would have been, in effect, hurting of both, and at once betraying k—— and El——, and especially injurious to the duration of power, in such as however fond of it, could not, if they had the least grain of common sense, have expected to keep it long after their lessening so cryingly that of their country. Nor, in truth, even for their own sake ought they to have wished for such a continuance. Could they possibly but have been sensible how much their remaining in places, essentially requiring to be filled, and only the emptier for their being in them, must contribute to sink any nation to the bottom, of which such as they were at the head, they would have been frightened at their own weight. They would have hearkened in time to the piercing cries and groans of their prostrate bleeding country, pointing to the wounds received in her vitals, through their means, or for want of their more effectual defence, and conjuring them to leave her, before her case should become utterly desperate, to the care of more skilful hands. They might have thought, if of thinking they had been capable, such a removal, even no bad bargain for themselves, as it might give those amongst them who had property, rather a greater chance
of

of preserving what must be so unsecure under no better guardianship than theirs. They could hardly too envy their successors in employ, the scarce not desperate task of repairing those breaches themselves had made, and set open in the public system, for that destruction to enter in at, not to all appearance so remote as for them to be very sure that things would last their time, the expectation however of which seemed to have constituted the not less execrable than foolishly false bottom of their whole policy. But should that expectation of theirs fail, (and could it either from historical experience, or actual conjunctures, be pronounced impossible that it should fail?) it would have been worth their while, for their own sakes, to ask themselves, in time, what, in such case might possibly become of their luxury without taste, of their pride without even the idea amongst them, of dignity, public or private, or of all their feather of dull lifeless state, that has somewhat the air of plumes on a horse, nodding over a corpse.

But, alas! there is no reasoning with, or proving any thing to insensibility. To paint then to such as they the moving distress of a perishing country, and their own concern in it, would be equally vain. Nor is that characteristic entirely an unhappiness to them: or what must be the cutting self-contempt, with which they otherwise could not but review those senseless delights, they had mistaken for true pleasure, their preference of transitory, to
solid

solid and permanent interests, and all those frivolous points of parade, on which they had been so humble as to rest their whole pretence to merit, or distinction, and to which they had sacrificed every thing that was intrinsically great, and noble, like those silly negroes, who barter away their most valuable commodities, for shells, glass beads, and such like baubles? from the same constitutional unfeelingness too, they not only remain callously proof against the consciousness of those calamities, being imputable to them, which, by the by would not deserve the name of calamities, if they affected none but them; but are ever ready, without compunction, to throw the blame of their own faults upon the broad back of innocent fate, and especially upon one another, in short, upon any thing, or any other than dear self. Should they too ever be involved in a general ruin, when none would be better off than those who had least to lose, if they could not well expect more pity from their country, than themselves had shewn to it, they would at least have a ridicule the less, in being no longer so glaring and so crying a reproach to fortune, with respect to the situation of which, were they to be brought down to a level with the lowest vulgar, it would be no more than they had ever been in every point, but those which are never but amongst the lowest vulgar received as very material distinctions from it.

Ever

Ever true however to their character, when the dangers to be feared from their misconduct were, surely without the least pretence to oracle-ship, or conjuring, long before predicted to them, instead of the better sense of availing themselves of those salutary premonitions, their silly disregard, or self-sufficient elusion of their force, turned on such objections, as those of their coming, either from competitors for their posts, or what was yet infinitely more improbable, from their enviers, as if there could, in nature, have existed, rational beings of an order low enough to envy them.

Sometimes indeed they, or those noisome insects, their pick-thank dependents, for them, affected an air of contempt, which became them if possible yet worse, treating those warning-pieces as if discharged at them from the scribbling-lofts of hacney-writers, who earned their bread and cheese by abusing them: as if it signified five farthings whether self-evident and consequently self-authorized truths, upon a just occasion, came from a senator, in a robe of state, or from a beggar in a skewered blanket. In what too, could the rank of those disgraces to any rank be, in the public opinion, a jot superior to the wretchedest scribbler? for after all, and at the worst, even writing nonsense can hardly be lower than living it, more especially too, in a sphere, of which the eminence but exposes them the more, and of which the importance, is but an additional

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reason for treating them with disdain ; for the greater mischief arising to the whole community, from their influence on its welfare, as weeds are but the more obnoxious, the more flourishing they are, and the choicer the spot is they spoil. To say nothing of that ridicule of which the transition is but too natural, and too pernicious, from their persons to their posts, titles, or dignities, which are thus degraded by its being seen possible for them to fall so low as to their share, a ridicule, in short, hard to be wiped off by their less worthless successors. In this how diametrically opposite to the genius of an Epaminondas, who piqued himself upon raising a low station, committed to him, to the consideration of a high one, solely by his personal merit, and dignity of administration ! surely too, had statesmen, or negotiators been hunted for in jails, or pressed out of garrets, they could not well have done LESS than those anti-geniusses, who only furnished with every requisite for power, and action, disposing of the supreme authority, together with all the treasure, credit, and forces of the nation, made no use of those advantages, but to prove by doing no more than they did, or rather by undoing so much, that, in the human intellectuals, there may exist prodigies of littleness, as well as of greatness.

It is however but fair to acknowledge, that they were exceedingly obliging to those who had not suppressed that opinion, which it must have

have been perfectly innocent, because impossible for common sense not to entertain, of their measures ; first in that distinction of them for their discountenance, so infinitely preferable, in point of honor, and of taste, to their friendship or favor ; and next in taking upon themselves, beyond what the most heated imagination could have presumed, the task of verifying every conclusion against them, more effectually by their conduct, than what the most able orators of the bar could fairly refute ; by the whole force of a prostituted rhetoric, or officiously crush with the hard hand of the law, should it, inconsistently with reason, suffer itself to be perverted into the protection of nonsense and follies, to which it would be doing much too great an honor to take notice of them, if they were not unhappily pregnant with the worst of consequences to a constitution founded on the law, and to which it must in all reason be dear, since the law itself would hardly survive it. With what grace too could they complain, that by less respect been shewn to them, than to the suffering dignity of a whole nation, the sanctuary of government was violated, which themselves were all the while polluting or pulling down, under the impudentest of all pretences in them, that of passing for its pillars ?

Surely too, of all the absurdities that could enter even into such conceptions as theirs, nothing could equal that of imputing such attacks to jacobites, or persons disaffected to the

constitution, with which they would so absurdly make a common cause, as if sunshine itself could be clearer than that a zeal for the constitution, and a disdain of them (for detestation is too serious a term for the futility of that tribe) were so far from contradictory sentiments, that they naturally implied one another. If the enemies of the present establishment had been to form a prayer favorable to their wishes, must it not have been that such might continue in power, as were incapable of service to it, and who were so likely by their enervity and misconduct, to destroy it as effectually, as the worst of men by treason prepense? could it then be stiled impudence or presumption, for such as exercised their liberty of reasoning upon those great objects of every subject's concern, by which every subject is liable in some degree to be affected, to spurn an imputation of disloyalty, from those on whom it might with more shew of reason have been strongly retorted, if, with any shadow of justice, they could have been accused of any meaning?

We are now however, let it once more be observed, for our comfort, to imagine that the wretched and inglorious times of their sway are happily over, and that the present men of power, whether a new set, or the old one (if happily miracles are not ceased) made new by a political regeneration, or in virtue of inspiration will change the whole face of things. They have at least before their eyes admirably instructive

tive specifications of what they have to avoid, in that woeful series of past blunders, of which, as therecapitulation would make one sick, so is the disgusting task unnecessary from their notoriety. It is then to be hoped they will exert themselves in earnest, and effectually for retrieving the honor and interests of the nation, now reduced to a pass which it would be as hard not to see, as not to be afflicted for it. Never were those great resolutions which have so often saved nations on the brink of the precipice, more necessary than now. Firm, and high-spirited measures, and those alone, planned with coolness, and executed with fire, may yet repair that recent loss and dishonor, for which thousands of such worthless lives as his, whose crime in it, is more immediately in sight, can be but a paltry atonement to a nation so deeply injured, and so justly incensed: whilst probably those who were in a great measure, and primarily the occasion of it, would not be sorry to see the people opening in full cry, and hunting the change, till they had run their resentment out of breath, or evaporated it upon that pitiful object.

Britain then collected and reconcentered in herself, has yet resources enough to make herself once more dreaded, or courted, when steadily conducted by men, who, from the merit of capable heads, joined to that of clear hearts, shall deserve the confidence of the public, without which nothing effectual can be expected. For as the national strength principally

party resides in the bulk of the people, the apprehension of their ruin coming precisely from where their remedy should be, would sink them into a fatal torpor, or indolence of despair, very unfavorable to the contribution of their powers towards saving their sinking country. May they then have the satisfaction of seeing the British system in charge with those men who are the capablest of doing justice to that great and sacred trust ! may all false, selfish, or party-considerations be drowned in that single one of superior merit to serve the nation : which if not the hope, must at least be the wish of every TRUE BRITON !



F I N I S.

